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XI PICKS GENERAL SANCTIONED BY U.S. AS CHINA'S DEFENCE MINISTER

General Li Shangfu, sanctioned by the US government for buying Russian weapons, will succeed General Wei Fenghe

SPECIALIST IN SPACE, CYBER WARFARE

Gen Li, an advocate of defence modernisation, played a key role in advancing China's space and cyber warfare capabilities as deputy commander of the Strategic Support Force. He was sanctioned by the US in 2018 over purchase of Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets by China's Equipment Development Department, which was then headed by him | P9

BEIJING'S PUSHBACK AGAINST SANCTIONS

- Analysts say Li's appointment shows Beijing's his scant regard for US sanctions. "It is a deliberate pushback against US sanctions," Manoj Kewalramani, a China expert at Takshashila Institution, said
- His appointment comes amid worsening tensions with the US shooting down an alleged Chinese spy balloon over its airspace

65-yr-old

LI IS AMONG THE SELECT FEW WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO PRESIDENT XI JINPING

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VELLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

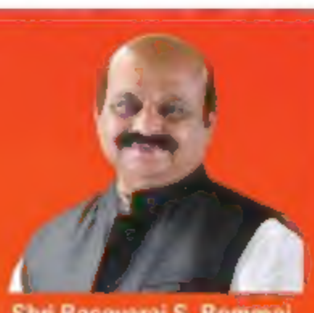
Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

G20 | Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav | NAVA KARNATAKA FOR NAVA BHARAT

Steps for the Welfare of Minority Communities

- Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Residential Schools with CBSE curriculum from 6th to 12th standards have been established in 29 locations in the state for minority community students.
- A 24x7 helpline has been established to address the grievances of minority communities.
- Karnataka Urdu Academy is translating the best literary books of classical languages into the Urdu language.
- A total grant of Rs. 26 crore given to 186 organizations of Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and Christian communities for the construction, renovation and repair of temples/churches/community halls and orphanages and homes of senior citizens.

karnataka information



Shri Basavaraj S. Bommai
Hon'ble Chief Minister

'Chennai-B'luru highway ready by Dec-end'

The Chennai-Bengaluru-Surat expressway, which will connect Kashmir to Kanyakumari, will be completed by December-end. Already, 50% of the works have been finished, said Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Sunday, at the inauguration of the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway. He said the Centre is spending Rs 70,000 crore for the construction of Outer Ring Road for Bengaluru which will be completed by March 2024. P6

Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes part in a roadshow before the inauguration of Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway in Mandya on Sunday | EXPRESS

'No recognition for same-sex marriage'

It is against Indian family concept, Centre tells SC

JAISON WILSON @ New Delhi

GIVING legal sanctity to same-sex marriage could cause social disharmony and disturb the delicate balance of personal laws, the Centre told the Supreme Court in its affidavit opposing a batch of pleas seeking legal status for the same.

Living together as partners and having sexual relationships by same-sex persons cannot compare with the Indian family unit concept of a biological man as husband and a biological woman as wife and the children born out of the union, the Centre said.

Responding to a batch of petitions challenging provisions of the Hindu Marriage Act, Foreign Marriage Act, and Special Marriage Act, the government stressed that same-sex marriage cannot be claimed as a fundamental right under the country's existing laws.

The government, however, clarified that while the State does not recognise other forms of marriages or relationships, they are not unlawful.

It said the union between persons of opposite sex is "socially, culturally and legally ingrained into the very idea and concept of marriage and ought not to be disturbed or diluted by judicial interpretation".

"Amongst Hindus, it is a sacrament, a holy union for performance of reciprocal duties between a man and a woman. In Muslims, it is a contract but again is envisaged only between a biological man and a biological woman. It will, therefore, not permissible..." the affidavit stated.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the matter on Monday.

The Centre also said a special status, which is granted to heterosexual marriage can't be construed as a discrimination against same-sex couples under Article 15(1) of the Constitution or as a privileging of heterosexuality.

'Changing law govt's domain'

According to the government, the country's legal framework does not recognise same-sex marriage. Any change in the framework will come in the domain of the elected government and not the court, it says

Activists flay govt stand

Activists and members of the LGBTQ+ community have criticised the Centre's position that marriage rights can only be given to heterosexuals in the country

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EXPRESS READ

'Iran-Saudi deal to end Yemen war'

CAIRO: Iran's mission to the United Nations says a breakthrough agreement with Saudi Arabia restoring bilateral relations will help bring a political settlement to Yemen's yearslong war, Iranian state media reported on Sunday. Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed Friday to reestablish diplomatic relations and reopen their embassies | P10

Adani pays back $2.65 billion loans

NEW DELHI: Adani Group on Sunday said it has repaid loans aggregating $2.65 billion to complete a prepayment programme ahead of the March 31 deadline to cut overall leverage in a bid to win investor trust. It repaid $2.15 billion loans taken by pledging shares in its listed firms and another $500 million loans taken to acquire Ambuja Cement | P10

ISIS link: NIA searches 5 places

NEW DELHI: The NIA has carried out searches at five places in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra as part of its investigation to unravel a conspiracy hatched by Islamic State to expand its activities in India, an official said on Sunday. The searches were conducted by different teams at the houses of the suspected persons in Seoni and Pune.

SHAH SOUNDS LS POLL BUGLE IN KERALA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday targeted Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left government over the alleged Life Mission scam and urged the state's voters to support the BJP in 2024 LS polls | P5

PM to Rahul: No force in world can harm our democratic tradition

PRAMODKUMAR VAIDYA @ Dharwad

"NO force in the world can harm the democratic tradition of India. India is not only the largest democracy, but also the mother of democracy," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Sunday, targeting former AICC president leader Rahul Gandhi, who recently said that democracy is under attack in India.

Rahul, addressing a group of students at Cambridge University recently, had said Indian democracy is under threat and several opposition leaders, including himself, are being snooped on using spyware. He also said institutional frameworks that are required for a democracy are getting constrained and the basic structure of democracy is under attack.

Without taking Rahu's name, Modi said, "Those who are putting the country's democracy in the dock and denigrating it on foreign soil are insulting the Jagajyothi Basaveshwara, the people of Karnataka, the great tradition of land and 130 crore vigilant people of India." He cautioned the people of Karnataka to be aware of such people.

Modi said he is fortunate to have inaugurated the statue of Basaveshwara in London. "Bhagwan Basaveshwara's Anubhava Mantapa was a unique experience of democracy. But it is unfortunate that in the same London, questions were raised about India's democracy," he added.

Inaugurating the newly-built campus of IIT-Dharwad, Modi said, "The roots of Indian democracy are nourished by the centuries-old history of the country. No force in the world can harm the democratic traditions of India. Despite this fact, some people are continuously questioning Indian democracy."

MORE REPORTS: P2,A

PM opens B'luru-Mys highway

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the 118 km-long Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway project, which is expected to reduce travel time between the two cities from three hours to 75 minutes, say officials. P4

Centenary-bound RSS eyes larger role for women

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

RASHTRIYA Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is looking to expand women's participation in its activities and will use its three-day annual general body meeting, which began in Samalkha, near Panipat in Haryana on Sunday, to explore ways to do it.

"There will be discussions in this meeting on increasing women's participation in social awareness, awakening and social change works of the Sangh," its joint general secretary Manmohan Vaidya said, adding that there is a dedicated arm of Sangh for women—Rashtriya Sevika Samiti—which works for their overall development. The meeting will also see discussions on RSS' course of action for the next year. The outfit, which will celebrate its centenary year in 2025, plans to increase the number of its *shakhas* (branches) in the country to one lakh over the next year.

"The work of Sangh has increased in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic," Vaidya said.

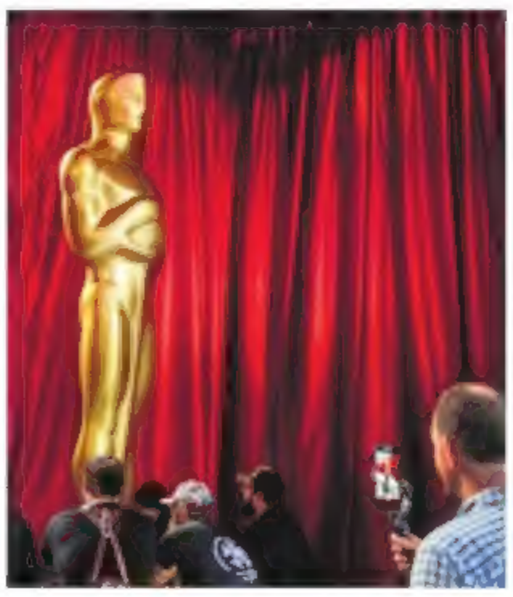
Currently, 68,651 *shakhas* are being organised at 42,613 places, *saptahik milan* (weekly gatherings) at 26,877 places, and *maasik mandali* (monthly meetings) at 10,412 places, Vaidya pointed out.

Apart from regular *pracharaks* (publicists) and *vistaraks* (expansionists), a team of 1,300 *shatabdi vistaraks* has been formed to expand the outfit's activities and reach ahead of the centenary year.

"The nation has 911 *zilas* (districts), and the RSS is active in 901 of them. Similarly, the RSS holds shakhas in 88% of the 6,663 khands, and 26,498 of the 59,326 mandals," he told journalists. Vaidya also said there has been an increase in the number of people wanting to join the organisation. Between 2017 and 2022, the RSS received 7.25 lakh applications for membership. Most of the applicants were aged between 20 and 35, he said.

SANGH PAYS TRIBUTES TO MULAYAM

The RSS paid tributes to late Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, socialist leader Sharad Yadav, senior advocate Shanti Bhushan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Hiraben Modi at its annual general body meeting here on Sunday. Tributes were also paid to actor-filmmaker Satish Kaushik, actor Javed Khan Amrohi and singer Vani Jairam at the RSS annual meet in Panipat on Sunday



WAIT IS OVER

Workers move an Oscar statue during preparations for Sunday's 95th Academy Awards. *Naatu Naatu* song from Telugu movie *RRR* is vying for the Best Original Song award. The ceremony will begin at 5.30 am (IST) | AP

ONE FOR THE AGES

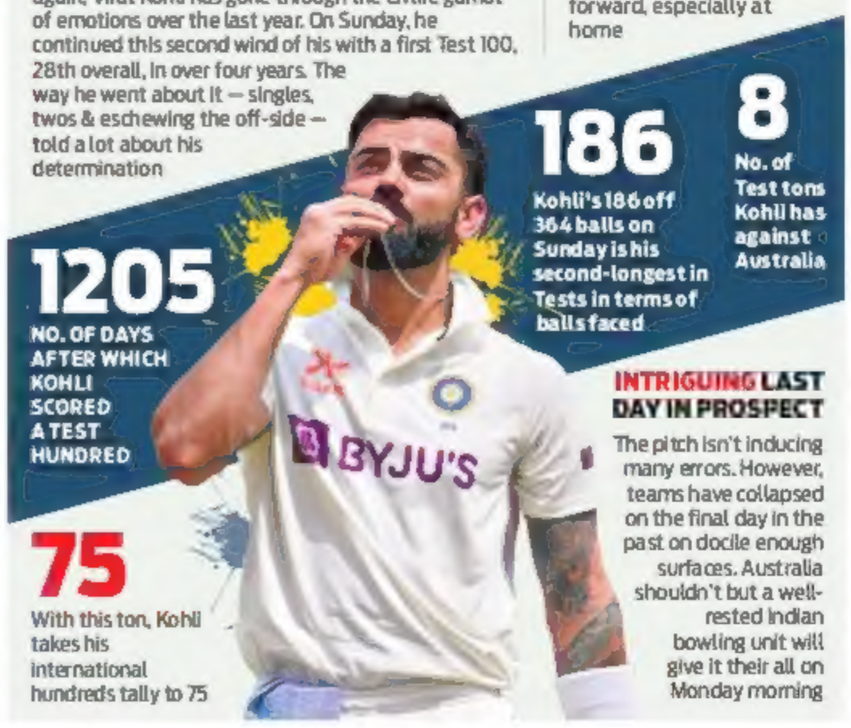
In what was another great batting day, Kohli & Co. took full advantage to score 571. A look at what transpired on the fourth day of the last Test at Ahmedabad... |P11

KOHLI BREAKS TEST DROUGHT

From falling out of love with the game to loving it again, Virat Kohli has gone through the entire gamut of emotions over the last year. On Sunday, he continued this second wind of his with a first Test 100, 28th overall, in over four years. The way he went about it — singles, twos & eschewing the off-side — told a lot about his determination

AXAR CONTINUES TO THRIVE WITH BAT

Axar Patel has looked the most in form of all the India batters this series and he scored a 79 when the hosts needed him the most. His reliability adds to their possibilities going forward, especially at home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NO. OF DAYS AFTER WHICH KOHLI SCORED A TEST HUNDRED
186
Kohli's 186 off 364 balls on Sunday is his second-longest in Tests in terms of balls faced
8
No. of Test tons Kohli has against Australia
75
With this ton, Kohli takes his international hundreds tally to 75
BYJU'S

INTRIGUING LAST DAY IN PROSPECT

The pitch isn't inducing many errors. However, teams have collapsed on the final day in the past on docile enough surfaces. Australia shouldn't but a well-rested Indian bowling unit will give it their all on Monday morning

NIMHANS helplines assisting rural population quit smoking

NAMRATA SINDWANI @ Bengaluru

HELPLINES and teleconsultations set up by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) have proven beneficial in identifying and treating tobacco and other addictions among rural populations.

Maria Auxilia, counsellor, Quit Tobacco Helpline at NIMHANS, said, "People in rural areas often get curious seeing the helpline numbers on cigarette packets and other tobacco products. They initiate conversations on their habits. It is seen that they are making efforts to stop consuming tobacco." Since people living in rural areas do not get easy access to mental health professionals, these free helplines have helped them.

Another service under NIMHANS, Service for Healthy Use of Technology, also recently started a detox helpline to provide consultations to people suffering from technology addiction. Pranjali Chakraborty Thakur, a PhD scholar, said the helpline, started two months ago, is helping many who got addicted to technology during Covid. "A lot of students call us. Also, many worried parents want to understand whether their children are addicted to gadgets. Counsellors guide the patients and help them balance their use of technology as it is not practical to completely eliminate the use of gadgets," she explained.

The Centre also launched Tele-MANAS (Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States) portal, a 24/7 service, in October 2021. Dr Rahul P, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, said over 1,000 calls have been attended to and 50 per cent of them were from rural areas.